

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBY #1763 3520006
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 180006Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8731
INFO RUEHDL/AMEMBASSY DUBLIN IMMEDIATE 0193
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE 0591
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0199
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 1732
RUEHN/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 1281
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 9342
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM IMMEDIATE 1077
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 2876
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA IMMEDIATE 0289
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 5174
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 001763

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM/WRA KBAKER AND EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2017

TAGS: MOPS PARM PREL AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO CLUSTER MUNITIONS DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 167308

Classified By: POLCOUNS James F. Cole for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY:

¶1. (C) Pol/Mil Officer delivered reftel demarche on cluster munitions December 17 to Dr. Ada Cheung of the Arms Control and Counter-Proliferation Branch in DFAT's International Security Division. Australia remains in agreement with the USG position on cluster munitions, particularly on the need for interoperability. Dr. Cheung described the efforts of the moderate group of 20 like-minded countries and NGOs ("20 Group"), including Australia, that is rebuffing attempts to force through unacceptable treaty language, and seeking to craft acceptable alternative language. Dr. Cheung reiterated three redline items for Australia in the Oslo Discussions, including the need for defense forces to be interoperable, the retention of legacy cluster munitions for training and countermeasure development purposes, and the exclusion of sensor-fused munitions from any proposed bans. She advised that FM Stephen Smith has accepted and agreed to these positions and that the new MOD, Joel Fitzgibbon, has been similarly briefed. End summary.

THE 20 GROUP EFFORT

¶2. (C) Australia continues to work with a group of more than 20 other like-minded countries (20 Group) and NGOs on interoperability and other issues. Through their discussions and educational efforts, support for interoperability continues to grow among more moderate and thoughtful countries and NGOs. The 20 Group includes the U.K., Canada, New Zealand, Poland, France, Finland, and Germany, as well as two Australian NGOs, AustCare and the Australian Network to Ban Landmines. They work as a team in the Oslo Discussions against the Norwegians and other NGOs, for example, insisting on treating offending treaty language as simply text for discussion purposes, and cooperating to develop acceptable alternative content. Dr. Cheung indicated the Norwegians and NGOs are recruiting participation by other countries, possibly in anticipation of introducing a two-thirds majority voting rule to outweigh the voting power of the 20 Group. 138 countries and NGOs have joined to date. Dr. Cheung questioned the effectiveness of a cluster munitions agreement

that did not include Australia or the U.K. and advised that Australia is prepared to withdraw from the Oslo Discussions if any of their redlines are crossed.

¶3. (C) Australia is working in parallel with the U.K. on a non-paper regarding interoperability for delivery at the January CCW meeting, in advance of the next Oslo Discussion meeting scheduled in Wellington on February 18-22. The U.K. earlier presented a paper supporting interoperability to its NATO allies, including Norway, but according to Dr. Cheung, remains under heavy public pressure from organizations such as Oxfam to stay a part of the Oslo Discussions regardless of the proposed content.

CLUNE